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AUTHOR	Glazer, Nathan
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ABSTRACT

Tuition tax credits and their possible future effects from the point of view of a supporter are discussed in this paper. The discussion includes a look at the positive effects of homogeneity in schools, maintaining that achievement is higher in private schools, where students and parents share common attitudes toward discipline and education. Also looked at are possible changes in enrollment patterns resulting from tuition tax credits. It is asserted that very few changes would result in rural or suburban areas where people are satisfied with their schools, but that strongest effects would be felt in cities. The possible supply and demand response of education and education consumers is examined. The author concludes that maintaining independence from externally imposed rules would be crucial to preserve the present advantages of private schools. The paper concludes with an examination of divisiveness in American society and whether the concept of a "common schooling" can compete with the concept of "free association." The author recognizes the value of a common schooling but believes that, in a country as diverse as ours, it may not be truly possible. He concludes that an opportunity for some to withdraw to a more homogeneous and effective environment can be provided without destroying our democracy or multiethnic society. (Author/JM)

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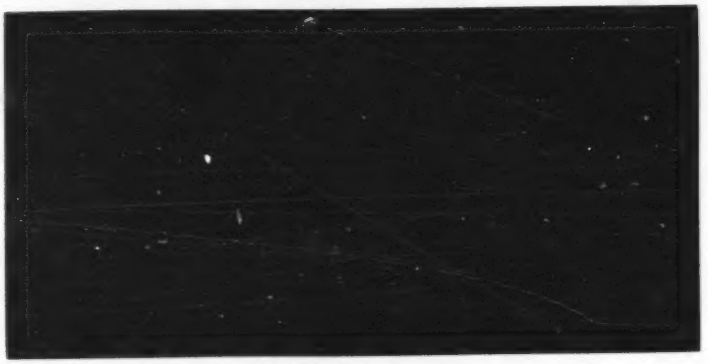

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THE FUTURE UNDER TUITION TAX CREDITS

Nathan Glazer*

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*Nathan Glazer is a professor in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University.

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Abstract

This paper discuses tuition tax credits and their possible future effects from the point of view of a supporter. The discussion includes a look at homogeneity in schools, possible changes in enrollment patterns as a result of tuition tax credits, the possible supply and demand response and regulatory considerations. The paper concludes with an examination of divisiveness in the American society, and whether the concept of a "common schooling" can compete with the concept of "free association".

I begin this modest exercise in projection of the future under tuition tax credits with an assumption that expresses a value that I and many other people hold, and is supported by the experience of many people seeking education for their children. The assumption is unfortunately directly contrary to that which underlies the ideology, if not the practice, of most present-day defenders of the common, public school: it is that some degree of homogeneity is necessary for effective education to take place.

Whatever the conclusion of the white flight controversy begun by James Coleman's research, and whether parents are leaving the public schools because of the decades-long march to the suburbs, or to escape racial integration, or for some other reasons, it seems clear that underlying all interpretations is a search for homogeneity. On the whole, parents think a homogeneous school is better for their children than a heterogeneous one. I believe the search for homogeneity as a basis for better education will be a major factor affecting response to a tuition tax credit.

To say that some degree of homogeneity is both sought for for better education, and necessary for it, is not to say much: the next and important question is, how much, and of what kind? It is no part of my thesis that racial homogeneity is necessary; or that income homogeneity is necessary. What is necessary is some degree of agreement on values among students, and among students, parents, and teachers. Undoubtedly race, religion, and income serve as some kind of index to the values we may expect children and parents to hold. But it is the values that are crucial. If students disagree as to what is proper behavior toward fellow students and toward teachers, then inevitably a good part of the school's effort

must be devoted to a kind of adjudication, to discipline. What shall be done about a student who curses a teacher, a student who wanders in and out of classrooms, a student who steals from other students, or attacks and robs them? Much parental concern over schools deals with just such matters: Discipline rates at the top among public concerns over schools. All well and good to say that discipline is essential for an environment in which education is effective, as recent research shows: but how is such an environment created when a key function of the school becomes protecting the safety of students and teachers from other students, or preventing behavior which, even if it does not threaten teachers and students physically, threatens a still prevalent conception of the moral tone that should prevail in a school?

One must now extend the notion that some degree of homogeneity among students is essential for education to another level: Some degree of homogeneity is necessary among the values of students, teachers, and parents. Once again, the issue is not racial, religious, or income homogeneity as such. In the big-city schools of the 1920's and 1930's working-class Jewish children were taught by teachers of different religion and ethnic background, and of higher class, effectively; as we know, working-class Italian children were not taught so effectively, even if a common Catholicism may have linked them to teachers of different ethnic background and higher class. The issue was I believe the degree of homogeneity of values: Jewish parents supported, in ways that we cannot specify clearly, teachers of different religion, ethnic background, and class, regardless of what they did. The fact that no Jews existed in the history taught Jewish children or that Jewish children

were criticized or mocked for their accent, dress, sanitary habits, and diet, did not turn them against the schools. Maybe, in some ideal moral universe, it should have: but we are talking now of educational effectiveness. It probably contributed to effectiveness that teachers, whatever their limitations, were taken as authorities. Commonly, parents told their children to mind the teacher, substituted, in response to teachers' criticisms, orange juice for coffee, and tried to approximate some model of suitable school dress within their means. Italian parents typically took a different attitude to school: they considered that it interfered with the ability of children to help out the family by working in the family business, or earning money outside, and they did not appreciate as much as Jews the potential money-earning effects of schooling.

Similarly, one can predict, as well as one can predict anything, that the experience of the children of present immigrant groups will diverge in schooling: Vietnamese, Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Cubans, Mexicans, will all show different profiles in school achievement. This has been the experience of the past, it will be the experience of the future. I am convinced that values will have something to do with these differences.[1/] One can also predict that parents among these new immigrants with a strong concern for education will do their best to seek out environments that are homogeneous as far as educational values are concerned. For some educational purposes, it is true--specifically, for education in group traditions and religion--ethnic and religious homogeneity is also necessary. The educational environments sought out or created for these purposes will also be homogeneous in ethnic background and religion. Indeed, owing to

paucity of numbers in any given locality, homogeneity in ethnic background and religion is often accompanied by heterogeneity in educational values, contributing to the relative ineffectiveness (along with other factors) that such schools have shown in the past in inculcating knowledge of the group traditions and language and commitment to its religion.

Two further points on homogeneity: is homogeneity in capacity for educational achievement sought and necessary, as well as homogeneity in educational values? As we know, it is sought. Parents seek for the best school, or the best classroom (in terms of intellectual level) in which their child can do well. Is there any justification for this? Can children do as well in a class of diverse children in terms of capacity to achieve, whether that capacity is considered inborn, environmental, or simply the result of previous educational experiences? Parents think on the whole they can do better in a more homogeneous class, where bright children can hopefully serve as models, and low-achieving children are not there to take up the time of the teacher (we have also learned recently from research how important is the amount of time teachers actually spend teaching). Perhaps a slow child is not considered as threatening to the educational achievement of one's own child as a disruptive one who prevents the class from working. But we all know that parents often complain that the work is too easy, or that it is oriented to the slower children or those who do not want to work too hard, and that many parents seek for a class or school in which their child will be challenged. As many parents seek for a school or class which is not too challenging and does not overwhelm their child. This is common parental behavior. Is it justified by

research? Research findings are tricky matters, and we will know more as time goes on, and as we try to extend the diversity of classrooms by the mainstreaming of severely intellectually limited children. I think if the matter was presented to a panel of teachers, they would agree that they can do better if they are not so burdened.

A final point on homogeneity: there is also a kind of homogeneity of values and practices that may be institutionalized among students that directly inhibits or prevents any effective education. If students characteristically believe the teacher has no right to tell them anything; if parents back them up in this belief; if the common culture among them involves attitudes, practices, and words that offend or disgust teachers; if it is widely believed that the school exists to train students for dead-end jobs, or to prevent them from acquiring education, what are the consequences for education? Education of some sort will occur -- we know that education by peers is a very effective one -- but it will not be education in those skills and that knowledge that teachers are best qualified to give, in reading and writing standard English, and in arithmetic and higher mathematical skills. Whether schools in which such values antithetical to traditional education are institutionalized really exist is of course an empirical question. Many teachers report they teach in such schools.

What does the assumption that homogeneity is necessary for effective education do to the conception of the common school, the school in which children of whatever race or religion or ethnic background or economic level are educated together in a common curriculum, teaching both common

skills and content and civic values and patriotism and commitment to a common diverse nation? 2/ This is one of the great glories of American civilization: any scenario which projects its radical reduction must give us pause.

I am a product of the common schools, and I assume my experience is not unique. My experience -- and a good deal of historical research -- leads me to conclude that the common school was not only common in that it was available to all; it was also common in that it reflected common values among students and teachers; and it was also common in that it was to a remarkable degree homogeneous in race, in ethnic background, and in income. Some of that homogeneity, we know, was enforced by law, as in all the southern states. Or permitted by law, as in other states. Or arranged elsewhere, as school attendance zone boundaries were adjusted to include some and exclude others and opportunities were provided in large school systems for distinctive types of schooling, either academic or vocational. But homogeneity in the common schools existed primarily because of the facts of geographical distributions of various ethnic and racial stocks, and of the residential sorting out of income classes. The rural areas and small towns of the United States were largely Protestant, of different denominations, and of Anglo-Saxon, German, and Scandinavian origin. The big cities were dominantly Irish, Italian, Jewish, and other East and Southern European immigrant. In American cities higher income meant moving out to newer neighborhoods or to suburbs. Homogeneity existed, exists, in the common school. It has always struck me as ironic that in one classic description of the American common school, August

Hollingshead's Elmtown's Youth, the principle minority is.....Norwegian. I cannot take very seriously that degree of heterogeneity, even if, in the school Hollingshead described, ethnic and class background did create a group of underserved students. But how modest this degree of heterogeneity was in contrast to situations where groups diverge in race and religion, as well as in ethnic background. The American common school presented some heterogeneity, and this was in its favor. Even in the big cities where immigrant masses clustered, no public school was exclusively Jewish, or Italian, or Polish -- though some came perilously close -- and whatever degree of diversity the public school offered was all to the good in instructing students in the reality of American diversity. Homogeneity is thus not only a value that is necessary for education to take place, but a reality that has in fact characterized the greater part of American common schools.

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II

What might we expect American education to look like under tuition tax credits? One must leave aside all the interesting questions that arise when we consider the specifics of the program that may come into

effect. The size of the credit; the degree to which it is refundable to the low tax-paying family; the limits on the kind of schools in which it can be used; the regulations that affect schools that take tuition tax credit students; these, and various details of law, regulation, and administration will undoubtedly affect the situation that ensues. Some of these we must neglect: others we cannot because they are of the essence of any serious effort to consider impact. The size of the tuition tax credit is important. But I assume it cannot at the beginning be large, in view of the realities affecting the Federal budget. Refundability, if the tuition tax credit is small, is not likely to have a major effect. If the refundable credit is $250, how many poor, non-tax-paying families are likely to take advantage of it to send their children to a school whose tuition, even under the best of circumstances, must be two or three times that amount? 3/ But regulations are another matter and the projection of effects must take into account the kind of regulations that we can expect.

One major factor that affects my expectations is that where homogeneity prevails, where parents are roughly satisfied with their schools, one can expect no large effect. And there are large areas of American society in which these conditions prevail. As the Gallup Poll of the public's attitude toward schools reports: "Persons living in rural communities and small towns and cities -- under 50,000 population -- give the highest rating to their schools; those in towns over 50,000, the lowest ratings." 4/

In rural areas and small towns outside the South, I think there is on the whole satisfaction with the schools, owing to a prevailing homogeneity of population in such areas, and I do not think the availability of a $250

offset to private school education would be much of an incentive to desert public schools in which there is generally pride, and which are seen as the community's schools. In the South, where the black population in rural and small town areas is substantial, and desegregation of public schools has been on the whole effective, one has seen the rise of private schools, both middle-and upper-middle-class parallels to the private schools (segregation academies), and working and lower-middle-class fundamentalist Christian schools. The desire to escape segregation is one factor in the creation of such schools; but for the latter another, quite separate from desegregation is the fear of the Godlessness, secularism, drugs, and sexual immodesty that prevails -- in part as a result of judicial interpretations of the requirements of the Constitution -- in such schools. I suspect that a $250 offset might be an incentive for many of the low income people who have created such schools with great effort and at great cost to move their children into them, and will thus contribute to their growth. 5/

In the well-to-do suburbs, as we have often been told, the public schools are "really" private schools: the population is uniformly prosperous and willingly pays high taxes to maintain the schools, and it can influence what happens in the schools. In the course of the 1970's, it is true, conflict has developed in such centers of progressivism as Newton, Massachusetts, and Montogomery County, Maryland. Communities have been split, conservatives have gotten elected to school boards. Thus, even in prosperous suburbs there are those who are discontented, particularly with the academic fare available in the high schools, and who

patronize private schools. A few more undoubtedly will be tempted to do so.

In the big cities we cannot expect any uniform response to the incentive offered by tuition tax credits. Every big city might be divided, as Daniel P. Moynihan once divided New York, into three parts: a more or less lively and somewhat reviving center; necropolis -- abandoned and burned out buildings, accompanying or ringing a black ghetto; and Dubuque -- single or two- or three-family homes in areas still sound, attractive to the more prosperous working classes and the middle classes. In the center, middle-class people with school-age children who can have always done their best to avoid public schools dominated by the ghetto poor: they will continue to do so, and accept happily the support of tuition tax credits. In Dubuque, the inhabitants are on the whole satisfied with their schools -- if, that is, they are not threatened by the requirement to send their children not to their local schools, but to inner-city schools, if, in other words, they are not threatened by "busing." There is nothing so effective in forcing the children of middle-class white (and black) parents into private schools. If this fear is kept far away, as it is, for example, in the still existent middle class reaches of New York City on the edges of the city, the middle classes do not desert the public schools. But one is hard put to find a city where this fear has not been raised actively, whether or not it has as yet become reality. Chicago has been threatened by busing for 15 years, and it is in painful stages becoming a reality -- in the meantime, great numbers of white children have left the public schools, as part of the general suburban movement or in direct response to

the threat. Los Angeles has experienced it, with disastrous effects on school enrollment by whites. Among our largest cities, it seems, only New York has escaped a general law suit. But there is no reason to expect that the legal standards that have found Boston, San Francisco, Denver, Detroit, Columbus, and other major cities guilty would spare New York. Presumably civil rights activists have been given pause by the practical problems of desegregating New York City by busing.

Perhaps the most active response to the opportunity offered by tuition tax credits would be among blacks, and in particular upwardly mobile blacks living in central cities in the North. "Most dissatisfied with their schools are blacks living in the North," reports the Gallup Poll. (Blacks in the North overwhelmingly live in central cities. There are few in the rural areas and small towns, and while the number is growing in the suburbs, it is still far below their proportion in the central cities.)

The demand for the opportunity offered by tuition tax credits then, will be among upper working class and middle class whites and blacks who fear the effects of integration with lower-class students. Those in this situation either live in transitional neighborhoods where the schools reflect the changing population, or in cities and metropolitan areas undergoing desegregation, in which they are subject to busing to schools in which they fear poor discipline, possibilities of intimidation and physical abuse of their children, and low educational achievement. Obviously the numbers who fall into this category can be affected by public policy, and specifically by integration policies that separate

residence and school, and make futile the effort to choose school on the basis of residence. (This is not to say that any integration effort increases the numbers ready to choose private schooling: integration on a voluntary basis, leaving aside for the moment the degree of its success, would not forcibly separate residence from assigned school, unless parents were willing to make the choice.)

The other large category of parents who will be attracted to private schooling, I believe, are blacks trapped in ghetto circumstances. Their children on the whole do not do well in schools; there is now a heritage of conflict with teachers and teachers' unions and with school authorities that has led them to become skeptical of possible school improvements; they have already had some experience with private schooling -- parochial schools in black areas, and private schools that have been started by churches or voluntary groups, which, while few in number, have received a good deal of publicity. 6/ One cannot expect mass movements: many parents will continue to take the most accessible alternative because they do not know enough to choose, or have enough energy to find, alternatives. Nevertheless, the confrontation between big-city public schools and black communities has proceeded so far that one can expect substantial numbers to try to take the opportunity offered by tuition tax credits.

A second major issue that must be dealt with in envisaging the future under tuition tax credits is the scale and quality of the response in the form of expansion of schools, creation of new schools, tuition practices of schools. "Supply" in the form of new schools and school places of course interacts with "demand." If there is a strong "supply" response, one can expect

advertising and recruiting of some type in an effort to fill the new schools. And similarly, if "demand" is strong, one may expect some kind of "supply" response. One fear that has been more marked in discussions of voucher proposals than of tuition tax credits has been that profit-seeking entrepreneurs will try to create schools simply to take advantage of government largesse. This is a more reasonable fear under a voucher scheme than under a tuition tax credit plan: the sums available (let us say, $250 per child) are not enough to encourage profit seeking by operators indifferent to educational values. One suspects the more likely response to such an incentive is less the creation of new schools, than the expansion of old schools, or the raising of tuition at old schools. One can indeed envisage a scenario in which the only substantial effect of an additional billion dollars of Federal money to private schools is..... to raise the salaries of private school teachers. If that is the case, and if these additional resources do not really add to educational resources, one can ask, what is the point? One might as well ask what is the point of reimbursing hospital costs when a significant effect is simply to raise the wages of low-paid hospital workers. In the school case, there is the additional value -- if one considers it a value, as I do -- that freedom of choice is being assisted and encouraged, and one can expect that a chosen education will be a better education.

It is not easy to see where new school entrepreneurs will come from. The most likely source is the activist religious denominations, in particular the Christian fundamentalist denominations. They have already launched numbers of schools with no government aid; their tuitions and

costs are low, and $250 may mean a good deal to the families of their pupils. A more modest response may be expected from Catholic schools, which also have organizations in place which have the capacity to st rt new schools -- but their ambitions are generally higher (in terms of buildings and facilities), and $250 a pupil will not go as far with them. One type of school entrepreneur, I suspect, will not be much in evidence: those who created the alternative schools of the 1960's and 1970's. These depended in some measure on an ideological environment in which a less demanding and freer approach to schooling was expected to lead to greater achievement and creativity among children from poor backgrounds. Fewer young people now believe this: they have had to work harder themselves in the more difficult job environment of the 1970's, and don't see school as much as they once did as a festival based on free attitudes and good feelings. Perhaps a new soberer form of private school might be attempted by teachers released from public schools, owing to falling enrollments (more because of demographic trends, I am suggesting, than tuition tax credits, though the latter will play a role). But the public school teacher does not strike me as an entrepreneurial type -- that is one reason he or she chooses the security and tenure (as it was once believed to be) of public school teaching. Nevertheless, one can expect some response from released teachers.

One of the great concerns that arises in discussion of tuition tax credits is their impact in increasing school segregation. I believe much of the discussion on this possibility is naive and mistaken -- and of course much is not naive, but simply uses the fear of segregation to attack

tuition tax credits, which are opposed on other grounds. The assumption of this argument is that whites are more eager to withdraw from public schools than are blacks; or because whites have average higher incomes they will be in a better position to take advantage of partial support for private school tuition from tuition tax credits than blacks.

The crude figures do show that today a smaller proportion of low-income children and minority children attend private schools than public schools. But the percentages of minority students in inner-city private schools are rising and indeed often make these schools, like the public schools in the same areas, almost exclusively minority. Inner-city Catholic schools, the dominant type enrolling black and Hispanic children, charge tuitions of about $450 for elementary schools, almost twice as much for high schools. Would the impact of a tuition tax credit, refundable, of $250, attract more black students or more white students? I see no evident basis for concluding that in inner city areas this impact would be greater for minority than for white students, or vice versa. One should expect similarly scaled withdrawals from the public schools.

But there is another impact on segregation and integration that has not much been noted and that should be pointed out: Private schools in general do help to maintain residential integration. The mere fact that a family is not bound to a neighborhood school by virtue of its residence in the city (or worse, bound to a school in some distant part of the city owing to desegregation plans) eliminates one reason for moving into the "right" school area. When one's child attends private school, one is not required to move to get into the school of one's choice, and residential

mobility for educational reasons is reduced. I pointed this out more than two decades ago in an article that argued that the great degree of residential integration on the West Side of Manhattan was made possible by the large concentration of private schools: since Jews could choose Jewish schools, Catholics Catholic schools, the progressive-minded progressive non-sectarian schools, and the traditionally-minded traditional private schools, it ended up that groups that might have been segregated if they were required to attend school on the basis of residence, lived in close proximity. 7/

A sophisticated and persuasive argument for the possible impact of aid to private schools in encouraging residential integration is given by Thomas Vitullo-Martin. 8/ Vitullo-Martin points out that Federal tax policies provide a disincentive to pay tuition in private schools and a positive incentive to use expensive suburban public schools. Local tax revenues in upper-middle class suburbs go principally to schools. These local taxes are deductible from personal income taxes. Thus, in effect a substantial Federal subsidy goes to families whose children attend such schools. These schools are typically located in overwhelmingly white suburbs, and are overwhelmingly white. If the Federal government provided relief to private schools through tuition tax credits, this would reduce the incentive to desert the city and its private school for the suburb and its well-funded public schools. Vitullo-Martin also points out that private schools have substantially increased their enrollment of minority

students, and would like to do more, but they are excluded from direct Federal funds to assist desegregation, and find it very difficult to provide the tuition scholarships necessary to increase minority enrollment.

My conclusion is that it is hard to argue any great impact on segregation in the inner city from tuition tax credits.

One key question that has to be considered in assessing the potential impact of tuition on tuition tax credits is whether an increased flow of public funds to private schools would affect the degree of regulation to which private schools are subjected, from federal, state, and local authorities. If one among the principal reasons for discontent with public schools is discipline and drugs; if the public schools are inhibited in their ability to create a good school environment through disciplinary measures by being subject to regulation; if funds to private schools will subject them to similar rules, and reduce the advantage they now offer to some parents over public schools; then tuition tax credits have no effect at all. Thus the question of what kind of regulations are imposed on private schools as a result of their receipt of public funds is a serious worry. Would they, for example, be included in school desegregation decrees and plans? Would they be subject to the rules on privacy of school communication, on due process affecting suspension and expulsion? The degree to which they could maintain their independence of such externally imposed rules would be crucial, to my mind, in maintaining the advantages parents now see in private over public schools. It should be possible, without worrying about First Amendment rights, to ban not only drugs but student behavior that suggests drugs are fun and normal.[9/]

But could private schools continue to do so?

The matter could become more serious. Since so much of the incentive to attend private schools comes from the desire to have one's children get religious instruction or instruction in traditional morality, what happens if prayer or the Ten Commandments are banned from private as from public schools by judicial interpretations, or if a court or the IRS decrees that a religious test for teachers or students deprives a school of the right to receive tax-deductible gifts, or is simply impermissible? These matters must concern advocates of tuition tax credits as well as opponents. For the advocates, such an extension of rules and regulations from public to private schools would simply destroy their differential virtues, and thus tuition tax credits would be an error. For the opponents of an expanded role for private schools, such an extension of rules and regulations would be desirable, for then one differential advantage would disappear, and the public school would be less unaffected by tuition tax credits.

The most careful estimation of these possibilities is necessary. I would make only one point: the extension of rule and regulation from public to private schools may depend in part on whether tuition tax credits provide publicly-raised funds to schools, but even more on the tenor of judicial and administrative rulings. Even without a penny of public funds, private schools are potentially and actually subject to a host of regulations at the state level. For example, Tyll van Geel reports:
"While most states content themselves with only requiring the usual litany of important subjects -- reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, U.S. history, study of the U.S. Constitution, health and drug education, and

so forth -- some states have imposed requirements on private schools that raise important issues with regard to how different private schools may be. For example,...many states...require that the language of instruction in private schools be only English. States such as Kansas, Maine, and Nebraska require their private schools to instruct in patriotism.... The Texas compulsory education law permits attendance only at private schools where good citizenship is taught.... In Michigan, private schools are told they must select....textbooks....[that] recognize the achievements and accomplishments of ethnic and racial groups....

"Diversity can also be hampered by the requirement found in the laws of over a dozen states that only certified teachers may teach in private schools....

"In several New York cases parents were successfully prosecuted who sent their children to Jewish parochial schools devoted exclusively to the study of Jewish law, the Talmud, and the Bible." 10/ William Bentley Ball describes an extensive array of state interventions into private schools, even without the excuse of tuition tax credits. 11/ And the Internal Revenue Service took it upon itself to determine what racial and ethnic composition of private schools justified the traditional tax exemption of non-profit religious and educational institutions.

To my mind, then, there is sufficient looseness already in our current judicial standards and state school regulations to permit an attack on private schools that would prevent them from being different from public schools: tuition tax credits would certainly increase the ammunition available in such an attack but would not be in themselves

decisive. What would be decisive is the climate affecting regulation generally. And here we have seen a recent change, which will run at the Federal level until at least 1984, that inhibits the use of public power to regulate private institutions, whether through law, regulation, or judicial decree. When President Reagan leaves office the Supreme Court will undoubtedly be less sympathetic to regulation of private schools than it was when he entered office.

The private schools would, I believe, maintain sufficient independence to be different even under tuition tax credits. There would be continual efforts in our litigious society to bring them under the same laws, regulations, and judicial interpretations that affect public schools, but in a context of disillusionment with the scale of such intervention by Congress, administration and courts, I think this litigation would be contained.

I foresee then a moderate increase in private school enrollments, with hardly predictable or discernible impact on segregation. With what effects for education? And with what effects for the general character of our society? I hesitate to project anything as to the effects on education. I accept the conclusions of the new Coleman research on private and public schools [12/] -- less I must confess because it speaks with the absolute authority of science and one must therefore accept it, but because it tells us what almost everyone knows: that private schools generally have more discipline, less drugs, more teaching, and more learning. This is the basis on which many parents choose private schools, and more would were the financial burden less heavy.

Have the private schools already encompassed all those who would do better under the various regimens of education they provide? Hardly. Would the increase therefore mean some improvement overall in educational achievement? Very likely. How much of an improvement would this amount to? Impossible to say.

A final major issue that a look into the future must deal with are the potential effects overall on divisiveness in American society. I have argued that homogeneity, in the public mind and in reality, improves education. Even if we insist that what is crucial is a homogeneity with regard to educational values, these are related to race, ethnicity, religion, and income, and thus increased homogeneity means that somewhat more children will be educated with other children like them in these regards than is the case today. What does that do to conflict in a multi-ethnic society? Less than we think. We have the example of other heterogeneous and democratic societies that maintain non-public schools (in our sense) with public funds, and more directly than by means of tuition tax credits. They include Canada, with different situations prevailing in different provinces, England, France, The Netherlands, Belgium, Australia, Israel, and undoubtedly some others. 13/ In France, one of six children attend "free" (Catholic) schools with state support; in The Netherlands, 73 per cent of children now attend non-state schools; in Belgium, 53 per cent. One cannot dismiss the problem of divisiveness and of a decline of common loyalties by the example of other nations: each country has a different history. The United States has had the unique problem of forging a common nation out of many ethnic and racial and religious elements, and of also

creating a nation which because of its size and power must play a central role in the world. This is not true of any other country.

But I believe we must in any case reconcile ourselves to a greater degree of divisiveness supported by public funds in the future than we have known in the past. Indeed, the requirements for bilingual education, now institutionalized in various state laws, judicial decisions, and Federal regulations, are a rather more significant force for divisiveness than state support to private schools, because they affect new elements in the population, whose need for some minimal degree of education and loyalty to a common culture and polity is greater than the longer established elements dominant in the present systems of private schooling. I do not dismiss the problems that can be created. The mere fact that parents prefer private schools, when they do, is because they <u>want</u> their children to be different in some respects.

One major possible development is to my mind the most serious. I have argued the greatest impact of tuition tax credits will be on inner-city schools, and among whites and blacks who attend them. These schools already struggle with terrible problems. What is the effect of the withdrawal from these schools of 10, 20, or 30 per cent of their students, and in particular those students whose parents are most concerned for their education, and busy themselves to seek out better schools and to inform themselves of the public assistance that will help them send their children to these schools? Must we expect and fear a process of creaming, with serious effects on the public schools of the inner cities? I believe we must. Here we come up against a tragic conflict of values

that simply cannot be mitigated. One value is that of the virtue of a diversity in which the better motivated and prepared in some way provide a model for other students, a leavening of a student body that is on the whole under-motivated and under-prepared, and perhaps most important from an education point of view provides some relief to teachers who deal with difficult problems and need whatever encouragement they can get. But there is another value involved, too: are those better motivated and prepared children who help maintain the morale of teachers and may help improve modestly the achievement of the others to be held captive because of their economic insufficiency, when others escape to a better educational environment? Are those parents who desperately desire distinctive religious and ethical and moral values for their children to be prevented from gaining school support in inculcating these values because they are too poor?

I do not know how anyone can be happy to come down, without qualms, on one side or another of this conflict. Certainly the problems of the children who have been left behind in inner-city schools will have to be addressed: we have been trying to do that for 15 years now, and we will have to continue. But this conflict in social policy comes up in other respects, too. Housing projects, we are told, are aided by upwardly mobile families who discipline their children and provide models for others, as well as providing some stability in a bad environment. Do they have the right to choose their projects -- with inevitable consequences on racial distributions? Do they have the right to have families who engage in destruction and crime ejected from the project?

No one can argue the inner-city schools reduced by the desertion of some part of their students will be better for it -- but at the same time there are other values we want to recognize, among them freedom to choose.

In the end, I am convinced that the conflicts of values in this country today, between the religious and the secular, the permissive and the traditional, those seeking experience and those seeking security and stability, between the culture of the coasts and the culture of the heartlands, between the cosmopolitans of Los Angeles and New York and the staid inhabitants of smaller towns and cities (as well as most of the inhabitants of Los Angeles and New York), are so great that the vision of a truly common school, in which all are educated together, simply will not work. Fortunately for its success, the common school, whatever its ideology, has not, for most of its history, been like that, nor are most public schools like that today. For those that are, a decent opportunity for withdrawal to a more homogeneous and educationally effective environment is necessary, and can be provided without destroying our democracy or our multi-ethnic society.

NOTES

1. See my review of recent books on ethnicity arguing otherwise, "Culture and Mobility," The New Republic, July 4 & 11, 1981, pp. 29-34.

2. There is a sense in which one can call the public schools "homogeneous," private schools "heterogeneous." Public schools as a system are much more like each other than private schools are. They also have as an objective "homogenizing" a diverse student body by teaching them common values and skills. But each public school tends to be more heterogeneous in the skills students bring, the educational values they adhere to, and in racial, ethnic, and religious background, than private schools.

3. Note that tuition in Catholic high schools, the cheapest, is about $850 a year, in Catholic elementary schools in inner cities about $450 (Edward McGlynn Gaffney, Jr., ed., Private Schools and the Public Good, University of Notre Dame Press, 1981, pp. 13, 26).

4. "The 12th Annual Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," by George H. Gallup, Phi Delta Kappan, September 1980, p. 35.

5. On these schools, see Peter Skerry, "Christian Schools Versus the IRS," The Public Interest, No. 61, Fall 1980, pp. 18-41.

6. See articles by Greeley, Blum, Vitullo-Martin, and Taylor, in Gaffney, op. cit.

7. Nathan Glazer, "The School as an Instrument in Planning," in the Journal of the American Institute of Planners, November 1959, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 191-196.

8. "How Federal Policies Discourage the Racial and Economic Integration of Private Schools," in Gaffney, op. cit., pp. 36-43.

9. See, for example, the discussion in Edward Wynne, "What Are the Courts Doing to Our Children?" in The Public Interest, No. 64, Summer 1981, over the dilemma faced by a Chicago school when it pondered whether it had the right to forbid a school child to wear a T-shirt with the slogan "Marijuana."

10. Tyll Van Geel, Authority to Control the School Program, D.C. Heath, Lexington Books, pp. 156-157, 162.

11. "Mediating Structures and Constitutional Liberties: Some Current Situations," in Jay Mechling, ed., Church, State and Public Policy, American Enterprise Institute, 1978.

12. James Coleman, Thomas Hoffer, and Sally Kilgore, High School and Beyond, National Opinion Research Center, 1981.

13. For a review of some of these situations, see Rockne McCarthy, Donald Opewal, Walfred Peterson, Gordon Spykman, Society, State, and Schools, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981, pp. 136-145. For an interesting analysis of the possible impact of public funding on previously private schools, see Donald A. Erickson,

"The School as a Mediating Structure: Some Concerns About Subversion and Co-optation," in Mechling, op. cit.; the article in this volume by Joel Sherman; "France's Teachers Resume a Hundred Years' War," The Economist, August 1, 1981, pp. 42-43.